

Co-ops Stick to Service



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO JERRY D. WILLIAMS

ONE MORNING, A CO-OP MANAGER came to work to find a slightly burnt stick on her desk. She knew there had to be a story that went along with the stick, and she waited for the giver of the gift to come share the tale behind it.

This stick was about 18 inches long and no bigger than the diameter of your little finger. It wasn't big enough to be dangerous if it fell on you—it was barely big enough for a dog to chew on. Yet, as she found out from the lineman who eventually showed up to tell its story, this little stick managed to knock out power to more than 100 electric cooperative meters.

The co-op manager heard the frustration in the lineman's voice as he described how thoroughly he patrolled up and down 8 miles of line, trying to locate the source of the problem. He could not find it, but he would not give up until he did. He knew that lights were out and members needed electricity. Nobody, co-op employees included, enjoys being without power.

The lineman was turning around to patrol the line yet another time when his eye caught something. It was this stick—this tiny stick wedged in equipment atop a pole that knocked out service to so many. Once he'd found it, things moved fast. Repairs were made, and power was restored.

Normally, that would be the end of the story ... but that little stick made me start thinking about all we do to serve the members of Lamar Electric Cooperative. As I learned about this outage, I was thinking about the dedication of our own linemen, who work with the same degree of diligence to restore electricity in their commitment to serving you, our members.

The story also made me want to share with our members the challenges of power restoration. The difficulty in finding this stick is an example of why, when you call our office, we do not always know how

long restoration will take or what is causing an outage. We do our absolute best, but there are many variables in nature that we cannot control.

Not long ago, a small forked limb caught at the top of one of our poles north of Clarksville. There was not a tree within 100 yards of that pole. The wind had broken it out of a tree and wind carried it to the pole. That limb was no more than 20 inches long, but it caught at just the right angle.

Earlier this week, just before the sun went down, over 900 members lost power in Red River County. Within a few minutes hundreds of phone calls were made, jamming up all phone lines. Of course, several hundred got busy signals. A few tech savvy members simply texted their outage report, using only six letters "OUTAGE", and received a confirming text their outage had been reported, as well as a text when power was restored. (See our Web Page for Instructions on how to do this)

That very evening, I had considered shredding my horse pasture to get rid of those pesky sticky seeds that were plaguing my horse Lady Bug. Knowing that it would get dark before the job could be finished, I waited. At the same time, one of our members tried to get his shredding done before it got too dark. The result was a snagged guy wire, a broken pole and a major three phase power line on the ground. Unfortunately that was not all.

With temperatures nearing 100 degrees, the circuit was fully loaded and a few spans away three very large step down transformers were doing their job, till the downed wires wrapped together creating a phase to phase short. Our linemen found the broken pole and frustrated farmer fairly quickly.

With fingers crossed the two linemen feverishly worked to remove the connections between the cross arm and broken pole from the wires. Members were told of the progress in anticipation of this bringing the outage to an end. Sure enough, there was enough tension on the wires to allow clearance from the ground when the weight of the pole was removed. With a grin on their faces the linemen rushed to the Sherry Substation and closed the breaker. But, it went right back off! What had they missed?

Miles of power line was patrolled again, but everything was in place. Finally, one of the linemen had a hunch and climbed over a fence to look at the back side of the three large step-down transformers. The pressure relief valve was on the back side of each one, and black oil was streaking down the side of



the gray tank on each one. The fault current when the wires wrapped together had been too much for the wire inside the stepdown transformers.

Within two hours a mobile substation was parked at the site, connections made and power restored. This is just another example of why it is so hard to predict the length of an outage.

When you look at all the trees, birds, animals, cars leaving the roadway, dump truck drivers raising beds into wires, and pastures with guy wires in our service area and consider all the various weather conditions we endure, it is clearly a daunting task for the co-op to keep the lights on. Yet we do keep them on, most of the time. Day after day, week after week, our linemen and other staff ensure that our members have power.

Although some might worry about one small stick causing so many to lose electricity, I look at the millions of sticks we face daily and think: "Isn't it great that we do keep the lights on so consistently?"

I also think about what an amazing group of people our members have serving them. Thank you for letting us serve you. We promise to keep picking up the sticks every day.

Notice of 2014 Capital Credits Allocations

LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE recently allocated 2014 capital credits to each member's account.

As a nonprofit organization, at the end of each fiscal year, the cooperative must determine what margins were made during the year and allocate these margins to the members' equity accounts. The margin is the revenue received in excess of all operating costs.

These capital credits will be returned to members, as approved by the board, in the future when doing so will not weaken the financial condition of the cooperative. All margins from 1938 through 1969 have been returned to the members.

Eventually, all capital credits will be paid to each member. In the meantime, the funds are used to construct new lines or make improvements to the electrical system even though the amount is credited to each member's capital credits account. Capital credits cannot be used to pay your electric bill.

These capital credits remain even when the member no longer receives service from Lamar EC. It is very important that departing members keep the cooperative informed of their current mailing addresses so they may receive future capital credits refunds when they are paid.

Capital credits for each member in 2014 were calculated by multiplying each member's bill by 0.0426483539. For example:

If your total billing for 2014 from the cooperative, (consisting of energy billing and power cost adjustment) was \$2,000, simply multiply that amount by 0.0426483539. The product of this arithmetic is \$85.30.

In calculating your total bill, include any security light charge, but do not include any tax, service or miscellaneous charges.

If you have any question concerning these calculations, please contact the cooperative office.

(This article is intended to serve as an official notice of Lamar EC's capital credits allocation for 2014.)



1485 N. Main St. • P.O. Box 580
Paris, TX 75461

GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO

Jerry D. Williams

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Member Benefits

- Level billing
- Automated meter reading
- Free bank draft service
- E-Bill
- Visa and MasterCard accepted

Your Local Pages

This section of Texas Co-op Power is produced by LEC each month to provide you with information about current events, safety, special programs and other activities of the cooperative. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the local office.

CONTACT US

CALL US

(903) 784-4303 local or
1-800-782-9010 toll-free

FIND US ON THE WEB

www.lamarelectric.coop





Note the location of power lines and keep farm equipment a safe distance from them.

Avoid Electrical Dangers During Harvest Season

FOR NATIONAL FARM SAFETY and Health Week, September 20–26 this year, Lamar Electric Cooperative reminds readers of a tragic story and offers information on how to stay safe.

After working in a field on a neighbor’s farm, a farmer parked his equipment, stepped out of the vehicle as usual—and received a severe electric shock that resulted in his death a few months later. The farmer did not know that his equipment was touching an overhead power line, and he became a path to ground for an electrical current as he set his foot on the ground.

The rush to harvest can result in agricultural workers and farmers working extra-long days with little sleep, which can impair judgment and allow them to forget necessary precautions. Power lines can pose a major hazard for farmers. Typically, power lines over roads and rural areas have a minimum clearance of 18 feet, and 12.5 feet over residential private property.

Before working in a field or around shops or grain bins, always take the time to note the location of power lines so that you can make sure to remain a safe distance from them.

To stay safe around overhead power lines, we urge farm operators and workers to:

- ▶ Always use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- ▶ Use care when raising augers or the beds of grain trucks around power lines.
- ▶ Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines—at all times, in all directions.
- ▶ Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance.
- ▶ Always remember to lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- ▶ Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- ▶ If a power line is sagging or low, call the electric cooperative immediately.

If contact is made with a power line, remember that it is almost always safest to stay on the equipment. Make sure to warn others to stay away and call the electric co-op immediately.

The only reason to exit is if the equipment is on fire. If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together, avoiding touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, “bunny hop” away.

If you see someone’s equipment in contact with a power line, the best help you can give is from a safe distance. Make sure to yell out to, signal or call the equipment operator to make sure he remains in the vehicle. Notify the cooperative immediately.

No-Rinse Revolution

THE NEWEST DISHWASHERS do such a good job of cleaning dishes that manufacturers say you don’t even have to rinse them before placing them in the appliance. That’s a huge saver of water, energy and time.

Here are five tips for helping your dishwasher do the best job:

1. Scrape leftover food from plates and bowls before placing them into the dishwasher, but break your old habit of prewashing dishes before loading them.
2. Place dishes, glasses and flatware in the appropriate compartments in your dishwasher. If you do, the machine will clean them properly the first time. A tip: Load sharp knives with their tips down.
3. Don’t jam dishes in. Leave adequate space between plates and bowls to allow the water to circulate freely. Likewise, don’t let a large bowl or lid block the water spray so it can’t reach the inside of other dishes and glasses.
4. Use hot water to remove dried-on food, properly dissolve the dishwashing detergent and sanitize the dishes. Major detergent and dishwasher manufacturers recommend a water temperature of 120 degrees.
5. If your house has “hard” water, fill both of your dishwasher’s detergent cups and use a rinsing agent.



A Change for the Better

WHEN IT COMES TO ENERGY EFFICIENCY in the home, sometimes small changes can make a big impact. A small, unglamorous task like changing the filters on your HVAC system makes your unit run more efficiently, keeping your house cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. It also saves money. The savings gained from having your system run efficiently can be applied to fun for your family.

The Lowdown on Dirt

As you move around your home, you drive dust into the air from carpets, furniture and drapes. Dust and dirt trapped in a system's air filter leads to several problems, including reduced airflow in the home and up to 15 percent higher operating costs; potentially costly duct cleaning or replacement; and lowered system efficiency.

Making the Switch

Get busy changing or cleaning the air filter in your heating/cooling system. Many HVAC professionals recommend that you clean or change the filter on your air conditioner or furnace monthly. It's simple and easy, and in many cases, it only takes a few minutes.

Filters are available in a variety of types and efficiencies, rated by a Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value. MERV tests filter effectiveness and was developed by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers. The higher the MERV number, the higher the filter's effectiveness at keeping dust out of your system. Although most types of filters must be replaced, some filters are reusable.

Don't forget about the winter months: Your heating system needs to work as efficiently as possible to keep you warm, and a clean air filter helps it do just that.

Heating and cooling professionals recommend turning your system off before changing the air filter. Make sure that the arrow on the filter—which indicates the direction of the airflow—is pointing toward the blower motor. When you've made the change, turn your system back on.

A dirty HVAC filter can rob your system of performance, leading to higher bills in both summer and winter.

the air quality in your home, changing your air filter is a great opportunity to teach your family more about energy efficiency. Consider getting everyone involved, and the entire family will learn how simple changes can make a big difference.

For other tips on how to save, visit lamarelectric.coop or call our efficiency experts at Lamar Electric Cooperative.

A Teachable Moment

Beyond saving money and improving



RED RIVER VALLEY FAIR
September 29–October 3

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Country Corner Events

SEPTEMBER 3

Live demonstration of grain bin rescue tube and safety equipment. Sports pavilion at Love Civic Center in Paris, 5 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 4–6

Northeast Texas Travelers 29th Annual Rod Run. Live entertainment Friday night on the plaza in historic downtown Paris. Continues Saturday and Sunday at the Red River Valley Fairgrounds in Paris. Cash prizes for cars and trucks from 1975 and older. Awards at 11 a.m. Sunday. Must be present to win. For information, visit northeasttexastravelers.com.

SEPTEMBER 12

United Way's 5th Annual Mud Volleyball Tournament. Paris Rodeo Arena. Call (903) 784-6642 for information.

SEPTEMBER 23–26

Red River County Fair. Parade kicks off event September 23 at 5 p.m. Fair is free to the public. Entertainment at 7 p.m. daily. Highway 82 East, 1159 Fairground Road, Clarksville. Call (903) 427-3868 for information.

SEPTEMBER 29–OCTOBER 3

Red River Valley Fair. Exhibits, entertainment, food, carnival rides and more. Paris/Lamar County Fairgrounds, 570 E. Center St., 6–10 p.m. weeknights, 11 a.m.–midnight Saturday. Call (903) 785-7971 for information.